SUMMARY OF WORK

for

Pre-Submission Seminar

of

Ph.D. Research in Geography

on

Stakeholders' Power Structure and the Distribution of Rural Tourism Resources: A Study on Sikkim

submitted by

Arunima Karali

Enrolment no. - PU/PHD/GEOG/2017/007 (Dated: 20th September 2017)

Registration no. - R-17RS12210088 (Dated: 11th July 2018)

Department of Geography

Faculty of Natural and Mathematical Sciences

Presidency University

Kolkata

2023

Chapter 1

1. Introduction:

1.1. Background of research:

Rural tourism flourished more in the nineteenth century when urban citizens began travelling to the tranquil countryside for peace. About in the 1970s, academics began to pay attention to this area. Since then, the academic debate on rural tourism has expanded from the developed world to the less developed world, shifting from discussions that were purely descriptive to those that were more critical and encompassing a variety of sub-themes (Karali, Das & Roy, 2021; Michalko, 2015; Nair, Munikrishnan, Rajaratnam & King, 2015). Scholars argued that it is nearly impossible to provide a comprehensive definition of rural tourism because rurality is dynamic, hybrid, and complex (Nair et al., 2015; Saxena, 2012). The consensus among academics, however, is that for rural tourism to be deemed "pure," it must be rural in terms of scale, function, and geography (Bramwell, 1994; Lane, 1994a, 1994b). Theoretically, rural tourism must always safeguard local resources, authenticity, and well-being of the local community.

1.2. Research problem:

Studies have shown that rural tourism is not always successful in practise and may only be a theoretical panacea. It could worsen existing issues and cause new problems, instead of being locally beneficial (Barbieri, 2013). This is why, the impact and performance of rural tourism remained central in academic discussion (Karali et al., 2021; Michalko, 2015; Nair et al., 2015). Aside from academic debate and the resulting recommendations a significant amount of money is invested in rural tourism each year. However, the projects either fail or encounter difficulties to date. Proper planning may minimize potential adverse effects and maximize economic returns to the destination, even though it is not a panacea (Hall, 2008, pp. 11).

Among many of the problems, the issues connecting the resources and the stakeholders — two crucial elements of the rural tourism system- are not explored enough connectedly. The politics and power structure of the stakeholders, the distribution of the tourism resource, are all intertwined. This interplay could have manifold effect on the viability and the sustainability of the business. For instance, stakeholders may have unequal access to, control over, ownership of, or management of those resources as a result of the uneven

geographical distribution of such resources. This could further restrict or broaden the scope of participation. Therefore, rural tourism resources and their distribution are required to be studied in the light of stakeholders' socio-political settings to avoid the problems of rural tourism functionalities.

1.3. Literature review:

Only a limited number of studies have focused on critical issues like community politics, marginalization, power dynamics, and influence reputation and how they may affect the viability of rural tourism (Iorio & Wall, 2012; Kelliher, Reinl, Johnson & Joppe, 2018; Saxena, Clark, Oliver & Ilbery, 2007; Saxena & Ilbery, 2008; Wearing & McDonald, 2002; Yankholmes, 2018).

On the other hand, tourism resources have been a prominent theme since the inception of tourism system studies (Leiper, 1990). Resources like landscapes and soundscapes have also been inspected from manifold perspectives in rural tourism studies. However, although these aspects of the tourism system (the stakeholders and the resources) continue to be ardently debated in the field of rural tourism, their connections have not been examined with rigour. Politics and the stakeholders' power structure are argued to have significant and occasionally negative (Farmaki, Altinay, Botterill & Hilke 2015; Saito & Ruhanen, 2017; Wanner & Pröbstl-Haider, 2019) impacts on rural tourism operations. Consequently, these social features may also impact the distribution of tourism resources.

A historical examination of rural tourism reveals that academicians have assessed how the power of stakeholders affects different factors like planning and decision-making processes, collaboration and integrated management, investment and operation, etc. (Beritelli & Laesser, 2011; Hazra, Fletcher & Wilkes, 2017; London & Lohmann, 2014; Saito & Ruhanen, 2017; Yankholmes, 2018). However, these studies have not placed the distribution of tourism resources in context for discussion.

Only a few studies have made an actual effort to evaluate the relationship between stakeholders, their power, and the available resources. Using a case study approach, Saito & Ruhanen (2017) investigated the various types of power that influence stakeholder collaborations in tourism destination planning and management. In the context of the Indian economy, Hazra et al. (2017) examined the relationship between power, dependence, and tourism resources. Using a heritage tourism destination as a case study, they evaluated the

power and dependency dynamics between stakeholders and gauged their interactions. However, this study still lacks the context of a close-knit rural society.

1.4. Research gap:

The two crucial and well-debated components of rural tourism: the stakeholders and the resources, have jointly received very little academic attention (Karali et al., 2021; Saxena, 2012). There is a dearth of literature describing how stakeholders' politics and power structures influence tourism resources distribution, resultant touristscape, and the long-term viability of the destination.

1.5. Research question:

The following research questions are framed to address the research gap mentioned above.
How does the touristization process evolve based on resource distribution among the stakeholders?
Why are the resulting spatiality of touristscape underpinned by the stakeholders' politics and power structure at rural destinations? And how does it vary from a relatively more to a relatively less successful destination in rural context?

1.6. Objective:

This study aims to unveil the answers to the mentioned research questions and accomplishes the following objectives:

1. To explore which tourism resources are mostly impactful at rural destinations and what kind of spatial pattern of touristscape prevails during the touristization process.
2. To reveal which stakeholder groups are the key-role players in rural tourism operations.
3. To investigate why internal politics and stakeholders' power structures are related to resource distribution among stakeholders. Furthermore, how the subsequent spatial pattern of touristscape differs in relatively more and less successful rural tourism destinations.

Chapter 2

2. Methodology:

2.1. Research approach:

The current study's primary philosophical and theoretical underpinnings are exploratory and inductive. The present study adopted a mixed methodological approach. The baseline survey played a crucial role in this study because of its exploratory nature. Depending on socio-political contexts, spatial scale, and culture, people may perceive theoretical concepts like "tourism resources", "stakeholders", "powerful," "manipulation," and "connection" differently. With the aid of quantifiable constructs, the quantitative and statistical portion attempts to investigate the network of stakeholders, factors, and dimensions of power and its relationship with resource distribution. In the qualitative analysis section, a literature-based inquiry was conducted to operationalize the constructs, and narrative analysis was performed to unveil the untold story beyond the "final statistical truth". The spatial investigation and quantitative and qualitative analysis are also conducted here. The resources, the stakeholders and their network, and the spatial politics are depicted using mapping techniques to visualize the touristization processes and touristscapes.

2.2. Research design:

This section discusses the research design in relation to the objectives.

For the first part of the first objective, the impactful resources were identified based on three-fold investigations. At first, tourism resources were identified from the literature. The second stage involves the ground-level verification of these resources. Finally, the impactful resources were determined based on tourists' experience. In section 2.3.2, the sample size and design are discussed in detail.

The second part of the first objective is examined through a spatial lens. To investigate what kind of spatial pattern of touristscape predominates during the touristization process, the touristscape of each of these villages has been mapped. The network of diffusion is mapped, and the year of influence for each stakeholder is recorded to reveal community politics regarding the resources and their spatial organization.

For the second objective, three-fold investigation is administered. At first, based on the literature broad stakeholder groups have been identified. Next, during the baseline survey, stakeholders present at the operational level were identified through ground verification.

Thirdly, the selected stakeholders were questioned about their roles in tourism operations in general and resource distribution in particular.

For the third objective, multiple techniques have been adopted. The Social Network Analysis (SNA) has been used here to investigate the internal community politics of stakeholders. SNA helps uncover a community's embedded structure of interaction (Scot, Baggio & Cooper, 2008; Casanueva, Gallego & García-Sánchez, 2016).

For the second part of the third objective, the power factors were identified. Initially, they were identified using the literature. These factors are then rearranged, omitted, and integrated into measurable constructs. The effect of three factors, the connection of stakeholders, the knowledge and the economic status, on the power structure of stakeholders were examined for the present study.

On the other hand, the Lukesian concept of three-dimensional power is adopted here to measure the power itself, like - power over decision-making, environment and thought process (Lukes, 1986). The indicators for these three dimensions were identified with the help of the literature and a primary baseline survey.

For the third part of the third objective, the interrelationship among the factors of power, the power of a stakeholder and their influence on different roles of tourism resource distribution has been explored using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The partial least square (PLS-SEM) is suitable for small samples and exploratory research. A narrative analysis was also conducted to shed light on the local politics and conflicts at the individual level.

For the comparative study (fourth sub-section of the third objective), the findings were compared between less and more successful destinations. For a regional level comparison, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis) analysis is done at the district and destination levels.

2.3. Selection of the study area:

Sikkim makes a suitable milieu for promoting rural and community-based tourism. Academics have not disregarded the significance of tourism to Sikkim's economy (Chowdhury & Lama, 2014; Dar, Adhikari & Singh, 2019; Demkova et al., 2022; Paul, 2015). Sikkim has won numerous awards and titles for its tourism operation, including 'Best Tourism Performing State for The Year 2006' (2006-07), 'India's Best State/UT: Comprehensive Development of Tourism' from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of

India in 2011-12 and 2016-17 (Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2017). The extensive and prosperous history of rural tourism operations in Sikkim offers a perfect context for investigating the research concerns mentioned in the research problem section. In addition, Sikkim is home to several ethnic groups that share strong (intra-group and inter-group) communal ties (Bhasin, 2002; Thapa, 2019), providing the appropriate sociocultural backdrop for this study.

2.3.1. Sampling of the study area:

The study areas have been sampled strategically, incorporating both experts' opinions and tourists' perceptions. A three-round Delphi survey was conducted. The panellists were experts in rural tourism of Sikkim, including government officers, national and regional tour operators, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), CBOs (Community-based Organizations) and freelancing professionals.

The second technique analyzed the tourists' preferences based on 299 tourists (see table 1) who were about to visit (entering Sikkim) or have already visited (leaving Sikkim) one or more of these 17 rural destinations. These tourists were selected through a random sampling method at three major checkpoints: Gangtok (East Sikkim), Jorethang (South Sikkim) and Siliguri (West Bengal). The 17 most popular villages suggested by these two analyses were visited for baseline surveys in between 2018 to 2019. During the baseline survey, the numbers of operational ventures have been recorded.

The presence or absence of a community-based organization (CBO) was evaluated as an additional criterion. The literature suggests that a CBO or community-based organization, specifically a CBTO (Community-Based Tourism Organization), manages the rural tourism operation at the operational or local level and ensures the circulation of benefits within the community.

In the next stage, the success level of the sampled villages was determined. It has been determined by 14 parameters identified from the literature. There is no fixed threshold value or robust method to measure the success of a tourism destination. So, instead of an absolute scoring, the relative position of success is determined with those parameters and is termed relatively more successful. And relatively low scores are labelled as relatively less successful.

Table 1: Selection of sampled study area

Districts	Samples selected from Delphi	Final Delphi Score (popularity)	Scores from tourist survey	Status of CBO	Selection
North Sikkim	Lachen	2.72	83	PF	Selected
	Lachung	2.72	83	PF	Selected
	Dzongu	1.19	15	PNF	Selected
	Kabi	0.90	0	NFE*	VNS*
	Singhik	0.43	1	NFE	VNS
South Sikkim	Maniram	1.24	5	PF*	Selected
	Kewzing	1.09	4	PNF	Selected
	Sumbuk	0.67	2	PF	VNS
East Sikkim	Silk Route cluster	2.33	105	PF	Selected
	Pastanga	0.76	8	PNF*	VNS
	Yaakten	0.71	10	PNF	VNS
West Sikkim	Uttarey	0.71	9	NFE	VNS
	Darap	0.86	10	NFE	VNS
	Yuksam	1.52	14	PNF	Selected
	Okhrey	1.24	34	PNF	Selected
	Zoom	0.14	0	NFE	VNS
	Sribadam	0.05	0	NFE	VNS

PF*= Presently functional, PNF*= Presently not functional, NFE*= Not functional ever, VNS*= Visited and not selected

2.4. Sampling of respondents:

To identify the impactful tourism resources, a total of 769 tourists were selected using a random sampling method at the destinations. The destination-specific sample size is given below (table 2). Samples were identified and interviewed randomly at different crucial spots of a village like viewpoints, hotels, restaurants and even en-route.

Table 2: Destination-specific sample size for selection of impactful resources

District	Destination	Sample Size (N= 769)
East	Silk Route Cluster	105
West	Okhrey	92
	Yuksam	103
South	Kewzing	74
	Maniram	60
North	Dzongu	135
	Lachung-Lachen	200

A total of 317 stakeholders were selected as samples from all of the destinations to identify the key role players at the operational level and the roles played by them in general and in resource distribution specifically. The sample size for each village is given below (table 3). The same samples were interviewed to unveil the power structure and its relation with resource distribution and also local politics. The names of these stakeholders have been concealed using coded names to maintain the confidentiality of the information and the informants.

Table 3: Destination-specific sample size for identification of stakeholders

District	Destination	Sample Size (N= 317)
East (92)	Silk Route Cluster	92
West (69)	Okhrey	30
	Yuksam	39
South (62)	Kewzing	23
	Maniram	39
North (94)	Dzongu	21
	Lachung-Lachen	73

The sample design to select the sample villages has already been discussed in section 2.3.

2.5. Hypothesis building:

Based on the conceptual reviews from the literature as mentioned in the literature review section, the sampled villages, and stakeholders, the following hypotheses have been set out:

H1: The links (horizontal and vertical) of a stakeholder significantly affect their position in power structure

H2: The Knowledge of a stakeholder significantly affects their position in power structure

H3: The economic status of a stakeholder significantly affects their position in power structure

H4: Powerful stakeholders will have significant control over the RT (rural tourism) resources

H5: Powerful stakeholders will have significant ownership of the RT resources

H6: Powerful stakeholders will have significant access to the RT resources

H7: Powerful stakeholders will have significant managerial capacity over the RT resources

2.6. Chapterization:

Based on the mentioned purpose of the study and the research approach, the whole work of analysis, results, discussion, and conclusion is divided into six more chapters other than 1st and 2nd dedicated for introducing the research problem and methodology. Chapter 3 to 6 embraces the analysis, results, and discussions related to East District, West District, South District and North District, respectively. Chapter 7 reflects the inter-district comparison to give an overall regional idea about the whole state of Sikkim. Chapter 8 concludes the outcomes of the present research.

Chapter 3

3. Tourism-power interplay in East Sikkim

3.1. Identification of tourism resources (entire circuit):

All of the chosen villages in East Sikkim are part of the Silk Route tourism circuit, a larger network. Among the 21 most impactful resources, 14 are physical (geomorphological or climatic), making the Silk Route a physical resource-based circuit. Among the 14 impactful physical resources, eight (8) are non-distributable.

3.2. The case of Phadamchen

3.2.1. The 'touristization' process and the 'touristscape':

Since Phadamechen is a halt, resource owners tend to develop their resources close to the roads (see section 3.1). Thus, most lodging and fooding facilities have grown linearly along the major roads (see fig. 1). After 2015, due to overcrowding of lodging facilities and rising competition, older homestays experienced a decline in tourist inflow. They started leasing their properties to outsiders to guarantee a constant and predictable flow of tourists. Up until 2019, 13.63 % of the homestays were found to be inactive, while 86.36 % were either fully or partially leased out.

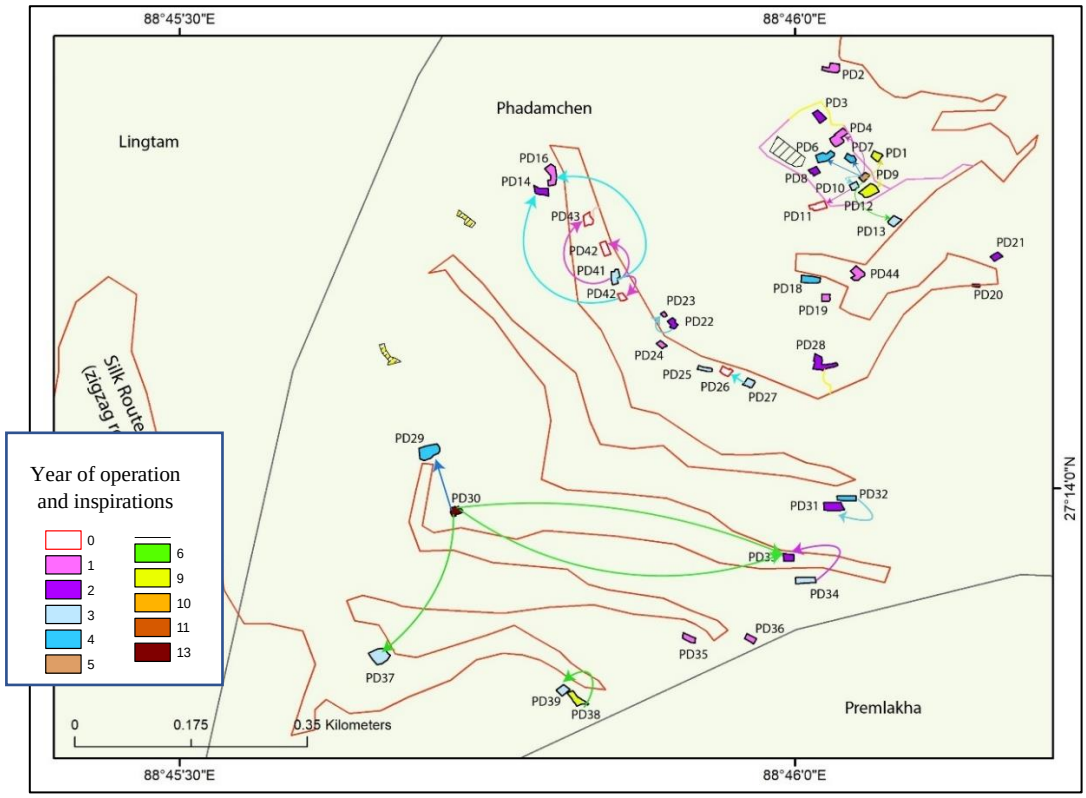

Figure 1: The Touristscape of Phadamchen

3.2.2. Key-role players in rural tourism operations:

The tourism business owners were native people, including the owner of accommodation units, tourist vehicles, eateries, tour agencies. Typically present at the operational level during peak season, the external lessees serve as service providers. There have been no reports of any operationally active NGOs, NPOs, CBOs, or even CBTOs having a significant impact on the local tourism industry.

3.2.3. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Conflicts between destinations provide more of a challenge for Phadamchen. The development of tourism along the Silk Route aggravated already-existing intercommunal strife and land conflicts, notably between Dzuluk and Phadamchen (see narrative section). Tourists prefer places like Aritar and Dzuluk over Phadamchen because they offer both stops and local sightseeing.

3.3. The case of Aritar and Dzuluk

3.3.1. The 'touristization' process and the 'touristscape':

Aritar is dotted with localized tourism resources. The homestays are often positioned adjacent to these resources or along major roads (Aritar Lake, Rai Temple) (see fig. 2a and 2b). Touristization was initiated around these strategic points, and after 2014-15, new ventures started coming up from relatively virgin interiors (*Basti)*. Here, 34.38% of the homestays are entirely operated by native stakeholders. 65.63% is (partially or fully) leased out. In Dzuluk, all homestays are leased out.

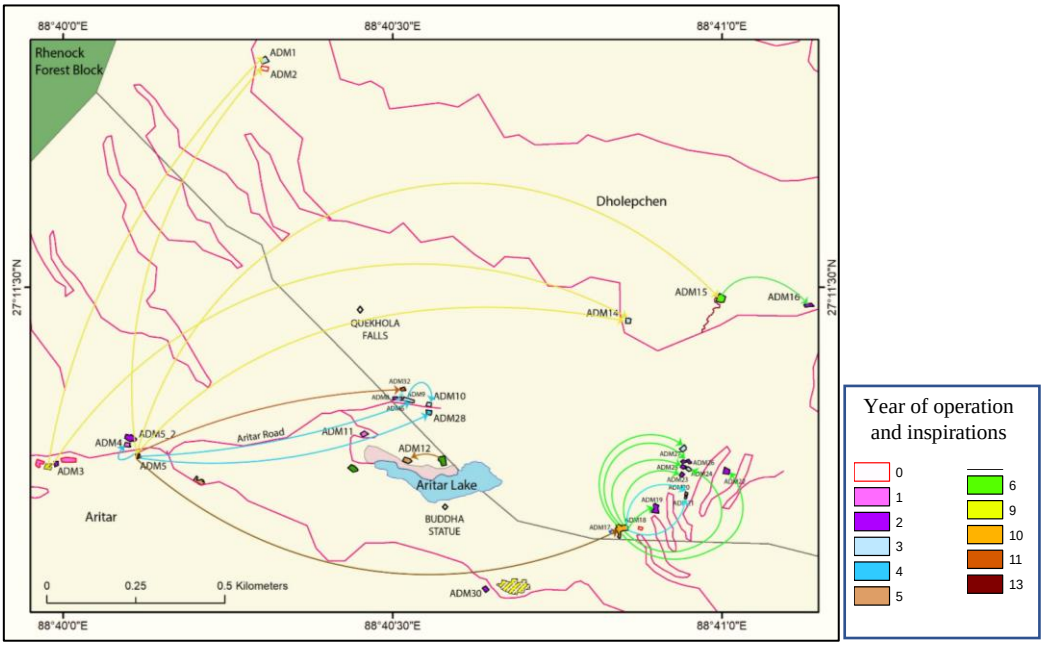

Figure 2a: The Touristscape of Aritar

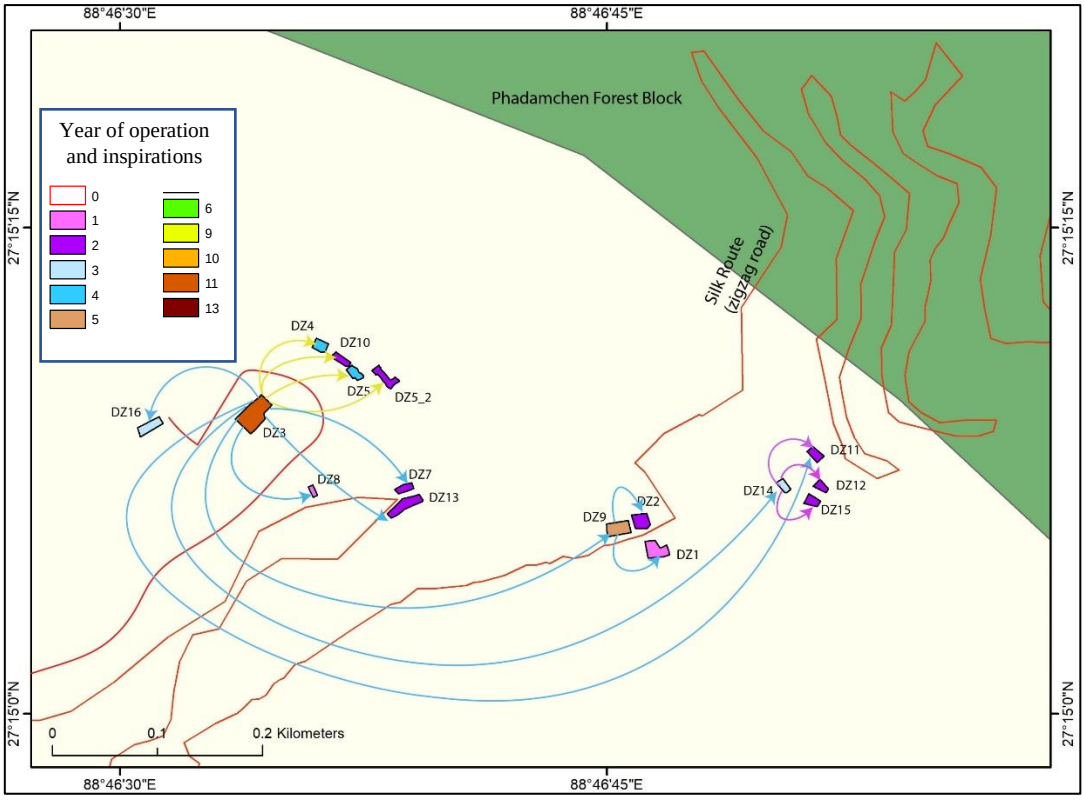

Figure 2b: The Touristscape of Dzuluk

3.3.2. Key-role players in rural tourism operations:

By not leasing out (34.38%) and continuing to offer traditional and local customs (food, welcome ceremony, local cultural information) at their homestays, Aritar has yet managed to retain part of its authenticity. Only 9.38% of stakeholders in Aritar and 18.75% in Dzuluk own fully active travel agencies. Again, except for ADLDS (Aritar-Dholepchen- Lampokhari Development Society), no particularly significant management institution is mentioned.

3.3.3. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Aritar and Dzuluk have a few intra-destination disputes aside from the inter-destination dispute with Phadamchen. Aritar unfolds how a homestay can be vulnerable to isolation in the local tourism network because of its advantageous location and gradual success (narrative section). The ego network of ADM12 (located right next to Aritar Lake) is distinguished by its connection to only ex-situ tour operators and lack of local connections. His connections with outside parties and the demand from tourists enable him to thrive despite the resentment around him.

3.4. The regional power structure of tourism stakeholders

In East Sikkim, rural tourism stakeholders having better horizontal and vertical links and knowledge proved to be more powerful than others (see fig. 3). In East Sikkim, an

influential stakeholder can significantly impact the tourism resource distribution from three grounds- control, access and ownership. Although powerful stakeholders are the top earners in their village, their economic status is insignificant in determining their power position. It underpins that in East Sikkim, one's pre-existing wealth or economic condition alone will not determine their power position in tourism operations. However, their connection and experience regarding the tourism business will.

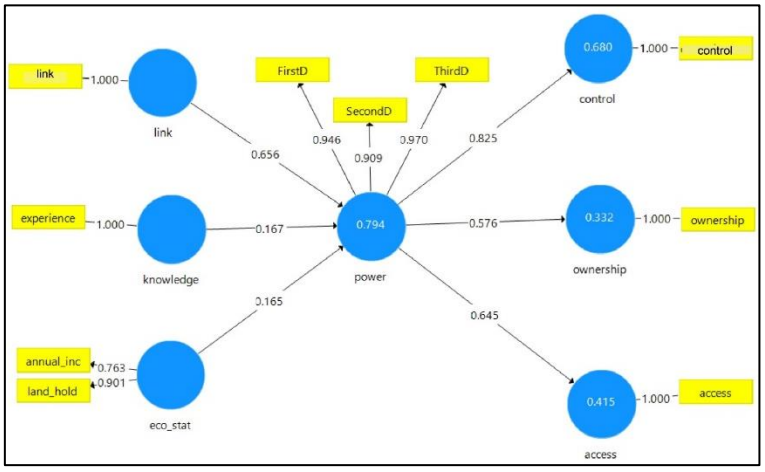

Figure 3: Relationship among factors of power, resultant power structure and resource distribution in East Sikkim

3.5. Regional narratives of sustainability in rural tourism

In East Sikkim, powerful stakeholders have better control and access to tourism resources, especially the local ones. The stakeholders might even compete with other stakeholders with equal access or control. This following statement also demonstrates how in this unequal competition, often due to differential levels of personal power, the less powerful stakeholders are isolated from the operational network.

> ….[N]o, we do not always operate in harmony, the competition is very hard. Especially if you're a newcomer and suddenly if your turnover is skyrocketing, you might end up drawing everyone's attention…….Did you see my location? Isn't it the prime location a tourist wants to stay? This is the reason I am currently being envied by other big players in the network, they tend to isolate me in this entire network, sometimes even spreading negative reviews about my venture (sigh)...

It bolsters the claim made in earlier research that a stakeholder's success (greater demand, higher turnover) breeds business-related envy (Ebrahimi & Khalifah, 2014) among other stakeholders, the operation itself fosters a variety of social conflicts and shifting stakeholder alignments based on power or resources (Yang, Ryan & Zhang, 2012).

Chapter 4

4. Tourism-power interplay in West Sikkim

4.1. The case of Okhrey

4.1.1. Identification of tourism resources

83.33% of the impactful resources of Okhrey are distributable. The trek and associated activity in the Varsey-based Rhododendron sanctuary are Okhrey's most well-known attractions. Few resources are non-distributable due to their ubiquity in the village.

4.1.2. The 'touristization' process and 'touristscape'

In Okhrey, the tourism industry emerged in the late 1990s (see fig. 4) with only one hotel near the local taxi stand in the *Bazaar*. At the end of 2010, this pioneering lodge morphed into a homestay. This transformation inspired the other stakeholders, and they applied for state-funded homestays in nearly 2014. Ten homestays got sanctioned between 2016-17. Among them, seven are operational till 2021.

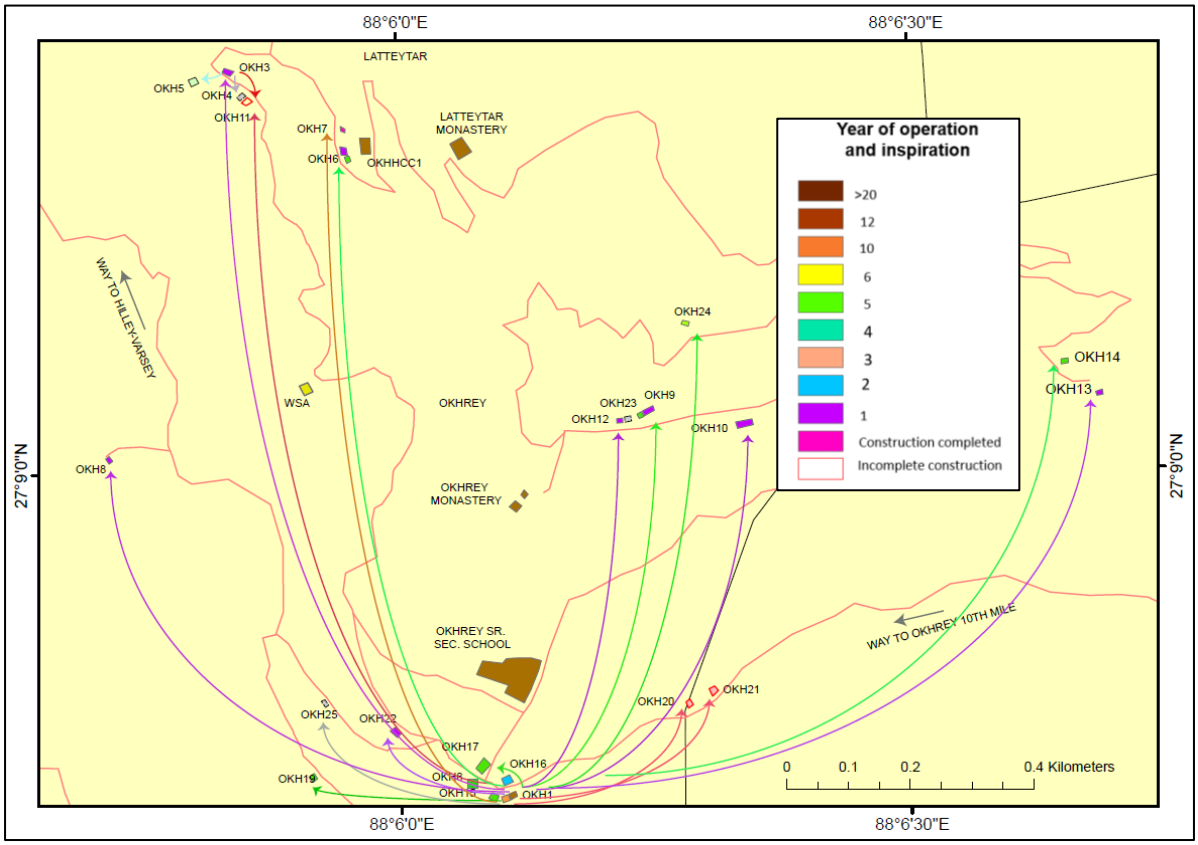

Figure 4: The Touristscape of Okhrey

4.1.3. Key-role players in rural tourism operations

Tourism business owners include the owner of travel agencies and trekking agencies, the owner of trekking gear, the owner of trekker huts, lodges, hotels and homestays, souvenir shops and eateries. Except for most of the drivers, the service providers are primarily local. The local CBTO is called Okhrey Village Homestay Tourism Committee (OVHTC).

4.1.4. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Despite having a CBTO, the operation is highly individualistic in Okhrey, as the function of CBTO is limited to dispute resolution only. On the other hand, new businesses are emerging from remote areas of the village. Insufficient promotion and remote location compelled newcomers to adopt promotional pricing strategies, creating price-based conflict.

4.2. The case of Yuksom

4.2.1. Identification of tourism resources

The resources profile of Yuksom reflects the fusion of rich physical and cultural heritage. This destination is heavily dependent on trekking. Moreover, 22.22% of the impactful resources are non-distributable. All the other resources are highly localized and hence distributable.

4.2.2. The ‘touristization’ process and ‘touristscape’

One of Sikkim’s oldest rural tourism destinations is Yuksom (see fig. 5). It has drawn trekkers for a long time because it serves as the base camp for many important trek routes, including the Dzongri-La trek. During the early 2000s, the touristization was rebooted with a sustainable motto with the assistance of a local, influential NGO or CBO named KCC (Khanchendzonga Conservation committee). From 2000 to 2005, homestays mushroomed from every village corner.

4.2.3. Key-role players in rural tourism operations

Tourism business owners in Yuksom are very similar to that in Okhrey. Service providers are primarily local, including drivers, guides, porters, trek organizers, trek leaders, porters, trekking gear suppliers, and staff at accommodations. The local CBTO is called YTDC (Yuksom Tourism Development Committee), and as mentioned in 4.2.2, the local NGO is called KCC.

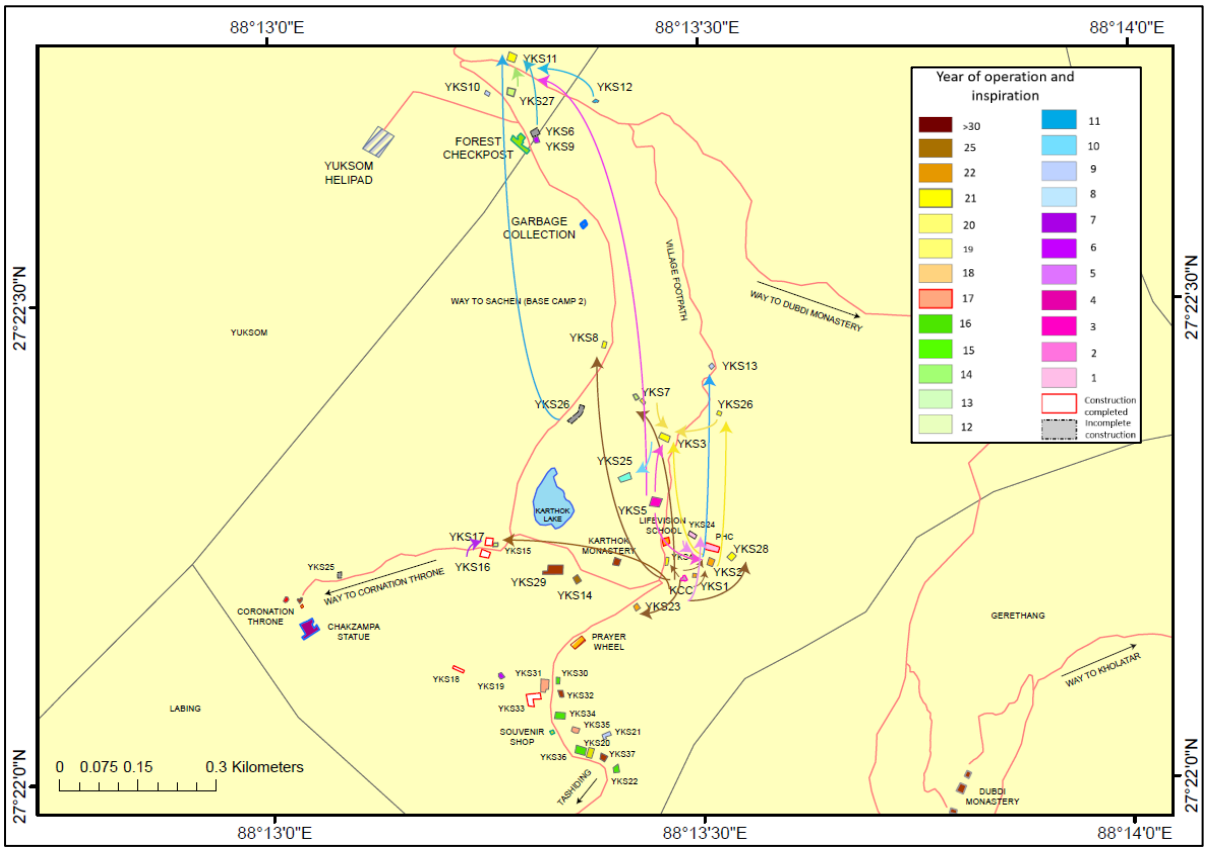

Figure 5: The Touristscape of Yuksom

4.2.4. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Yuksom also suffers from similar spatial disparity and the ensuing price-based conflict. The conflict in Yuksom is ideology-born too. The scale, ownership, and motivation of business operations frequently split stakeholders into conflicting parties.

4.3. Regional power structure of tourism stakeholders

For West Sikkim, the link is the only significant factor in determining the stakeholders' power structure. An influential stakeholder has the highest impact on the control of resources. (see fig. 6) followed by the management. This is because people with higher and better links are generally elected leaders in local tourism management. The pioneers occupy the top tiers of the power structure. However, knowledge alone has an insignificant impact on this position.

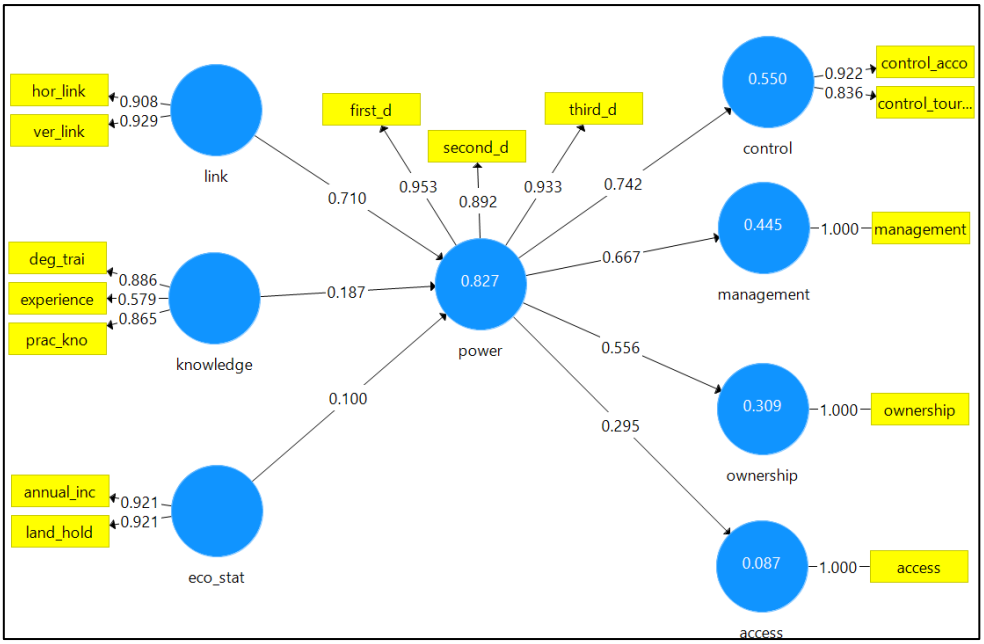

Figure 6: Relationship among factors of power, resultant power structure and resource distribution in West Sikkim

4.4. Regional narratives of sustainability in rural tourism

The current findings indicate the presence of price-related conflict. The reasons for penetration pricing are clearly expressed in these two statements -

> ….[T]his is not my fault, what can I do? Firstly, my homestay is at a distant place, secondly, Yuksom now has more accommodations than tourists. So, the only way to capture tourists is by offering lowered prices.

> "I am a newcomer in this business, I do not know much about the market. Right now, I'm mostly depending on flying tourists, just to capture them and attract the drivers who bought them I sometimes drop my rate even upto 700, so that even the driver can enjoy better commission. Another problem with my homestay is it does not have a very good view of the surrounding from here, so I have to somehow compromise right!...

Along with spatial distribution, the overcrowding of accommodation units and lack of promotion is also responsible for price-cutting. On the other hand, powerful stakeholders practice prestige pricing to combat this. Literature suggests that alternative pricing strategies are widespread among stakeholders, depending on the elasticity of the target market (Camilleri, 2018). This adds to the existing literature by showing that in rural tourism, given the elasticity of the target market, a stakeholder may alter the price of their products depending on their location, visibility, demand and power.

Chapter 5

5. Tourism-power interplay in South Sikkim

5.1. The case of Kewzing

5.1.1. Identification of tourism resources

Kewzing is a destination dependent on highly distributable, local, cultural and activity-based resources. Due to their limited concentration over space, stakeholders have varying access levels. Not only cultural, but the most impactful physical resource is also (the exotic view of the surrounding hills) unequally accessed.

5.1.2. The 'touristization' process and 'touristscape'

Kewzing started as a CBRT venture in the early 2000s (see fig. 7), but the operation started fragmenting in 2010-11. After 2015, only three ventures continue the traditional community-based operation. Participants (guides, drivers, packaged lunch suppliers, and cultural performers) are dispersed throughout the village. Initially accommodations owners have kept up their original homes to offer authentic experiences, but following the dissolve of CBRT these houses were also modernized.

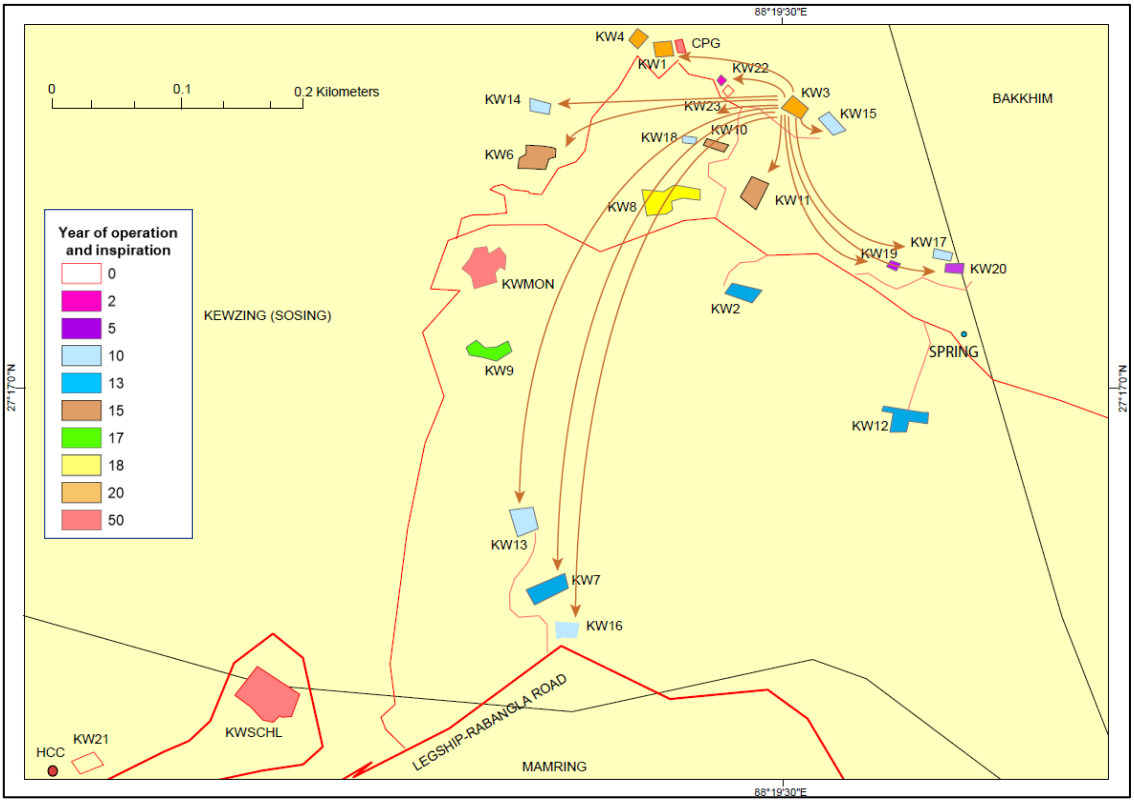

Figure 7: The Touristscape of Kewzing

5.1.3. Key-role players in rural tourism operations

Participants have contacts with ex-situ tour operators, but none of the properties has been rented or leased out. The resource owners and service providers (guides, bird guides, performers, cooks, and packed lunch suppliers) are exclusively native to the village. The local CBTO, KTDC (Kewzing Tourism Development Committee), was founded in 2002. It managed the whole operation (homestay allocation, arranging programs and festivals, collecting and distributing revenues, dispute settlement, policy formulation).

5.1.4. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Community politics in Kewzing have two significant aspects; politics based on location and operation. Impactful resources are geographically concentrated in pockets. Therefore, the owners (resource owners) or the nearby stakeholders (accessors) benefit more from them. It claimed that the CBRT operation is a trap constructed by these pioneers to preserve their hold on benefit regulation. KTDC also failed to address issues including shortening wait times, creating engagement, prioritizing collective needs, protecting business ideas and persuading for collaboration.

5.2. The case of Maniram

5.2.1. Identification of tourism resources

The blend of impactful resources in Maniram is similar to that of Kewzing. The resources are highly distributable in all aspects. The top three most impactful and distributable resources are the traditional Tamang cuisine, the cultural attractions (like performances, practices and artefacts) and bonfire activity.

5.2.2. The ‘touristization’ process and ‘touristscape’

Maniram also started its journey as a CBRT destination. Initially, (around 2007), homestay owners renovated spare rooms in their own homes and used them to host visitors. Later, stakeholders applied for state-aided homestays under the leadership of the pioneer, who incidentally had locational advantages over others (see fig. 8). All but two of the interested homestay owners’ applications for state-funded homestays during 2010–2011 were approved.

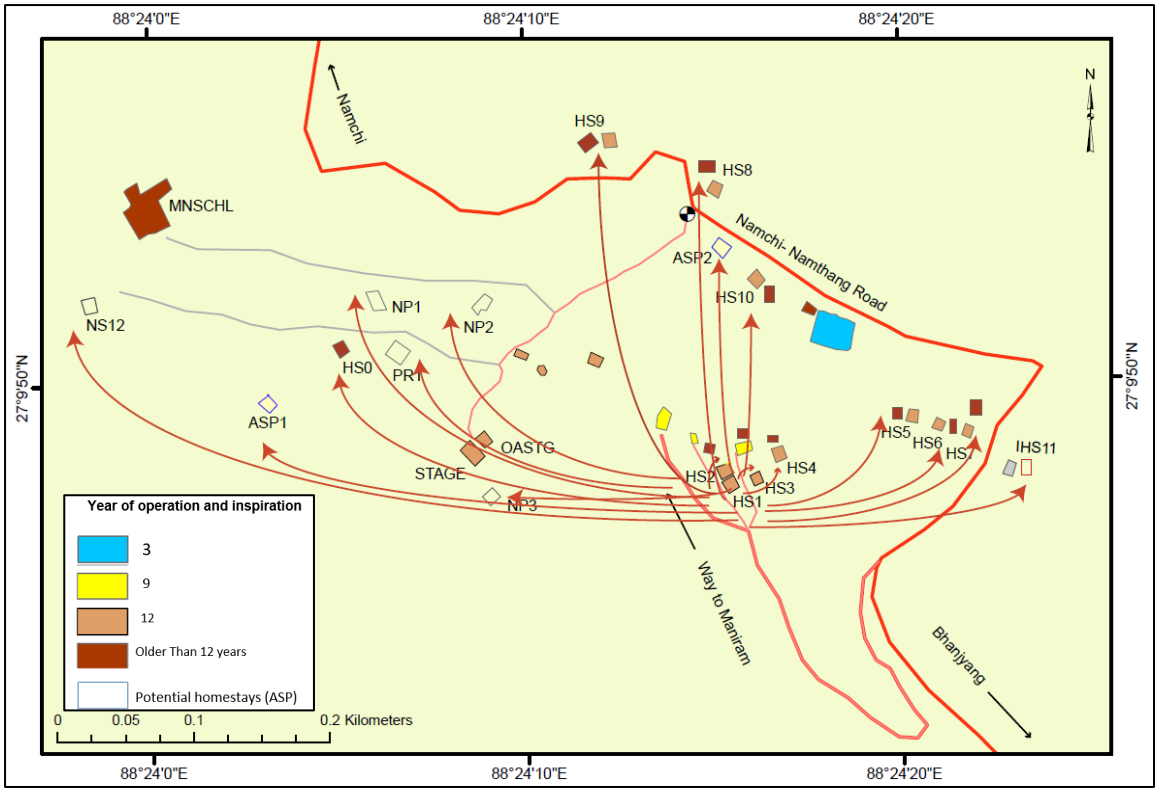

Figure 8: The Touristscape of Maniram

5.2.3. Key-role players in rural tourism operations

Stakeholders of Maniram adopted manifold roles and were exclusively native, similar to Kewzing. The CBTO, SSMVHT (South Sikkim Maniram Village Homestay Tourism), manages the entire operation, including promotion, under one website and social media platform.

5.2.4. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Maniram is an example of unequal resource distribution and community conflict (see section 5.2.2.). State-aided homestays were sanctioned for stakeholders living uphill due to better views and connectivity. People living downhill later participated in local tourism as cultural performers or guides, but their income from tourism was minimal and irregular unlike homestay owners. Thus, discriminatory treatment of the state generated community conflict.

5.3. Regional power structure of tourism stakeholders

In both the villages of South Sikkim, the connection of a stakeholder is the only significant factor determining their power position (see fig. 9). Both of these destinations have a community-based aspect in their operation. So, the powerful stakeholders have the highest control on the management of tourism resource. Stakeholders residing at the top of the

power structure are pioneers and have a significant influence on the regulation, oversight, and management of the local tourism industry.

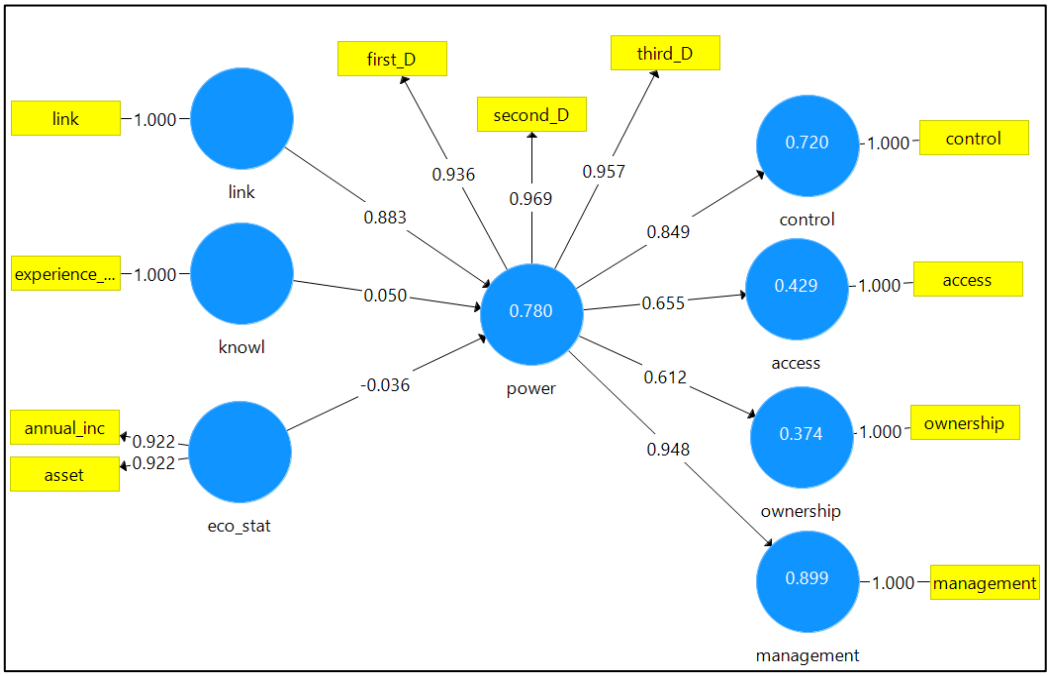

Figure 9: Relationship among factors of power, resultant power structure and resource distribution in South Sikkim

5.4. Regional narratives of sustainability in rural tourism

Despite starting as a CBRT destinations, the tourism industry became fragmented and exclusionary over time. A statement from Kewzing explains the problem related to the spatial distribution of resources-

> ….[T]he ground for the cultural program is far away from our place, often after finishing the program and interacting with the tourists we had to come back a long hilly path at night, which was difficult, especially for the kids and women, so a lot of us quit.

According to Scheyvens & Biddulph (2018), CBRT is an inclusive tourism that should engage socially and economically disadvantaged communities in the ethical creation or consumption of tourism and the sharing of its advantages. However, the existing CBRT failed to do so.

Chapter 6

6. Tourism-power interplay in North Sikkim

6.1. The case of Dzongu

6.1.1. Identification of tourism resources

Dzongu is an ideal blend of physical, cultural and activity-based destinations. It also incorporates both local and non-local resources. The top three resources are cultural (the authentic Lepcha cuisine, the cultural activities and the warm hospitality) among them only the cultural resources related to showcasing the rich Lepcha culture (Dzyotim festival or cultural program) are distributable in terms of management and access.

6.1.2. The 'touristization' process and 'touristscape'

Dzongu has been operating for 15 years, presently, limited to two villages: Upper Tingvong and Lingthem (see fig. 10a and 10b). The touristization in Tingvong is relatively new to Lingthem. The pioneer started the business in Lingthem around 2007-08. During 2014-15, under the SAGY *(Sansaad Adarsh Gram Yojana)* scheme, touristization in Tingvong started. The state-funded homestays appeared during 2016–17.

6.1.3. Key-role players in rural tourism operations

Accommodation owners bear the major part of the tourism business owners. Being a protected land for the Lepchas, the stakeholders are all native to the land. Dzongu has also developed its CBTO called DEC (Dzongu Ecotourism Committee).

6.1.4. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Dzongu is also the victim of spatial politics executed by the state. Unlike Maniram, the problem is not regarding the allocation of homestays but rather the built quality and level of completion. Almost none of the state-aided homestays located in distant parts of Tingvong and Lingthem are adequately built. It is mainly their conflict with the state. In Dzongu, conflict within the community is trivial.

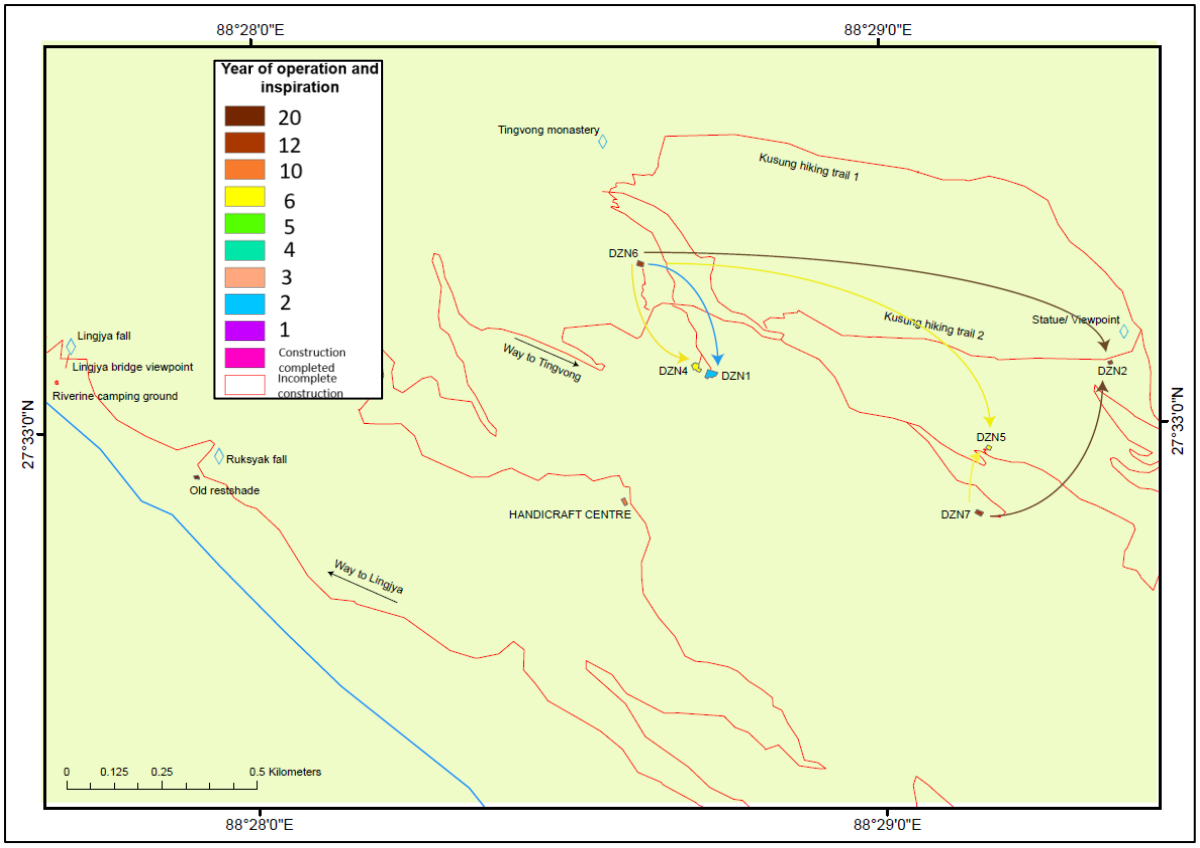

Figure 10a: The Touristscape of Upper Tingvong (Dzongu)

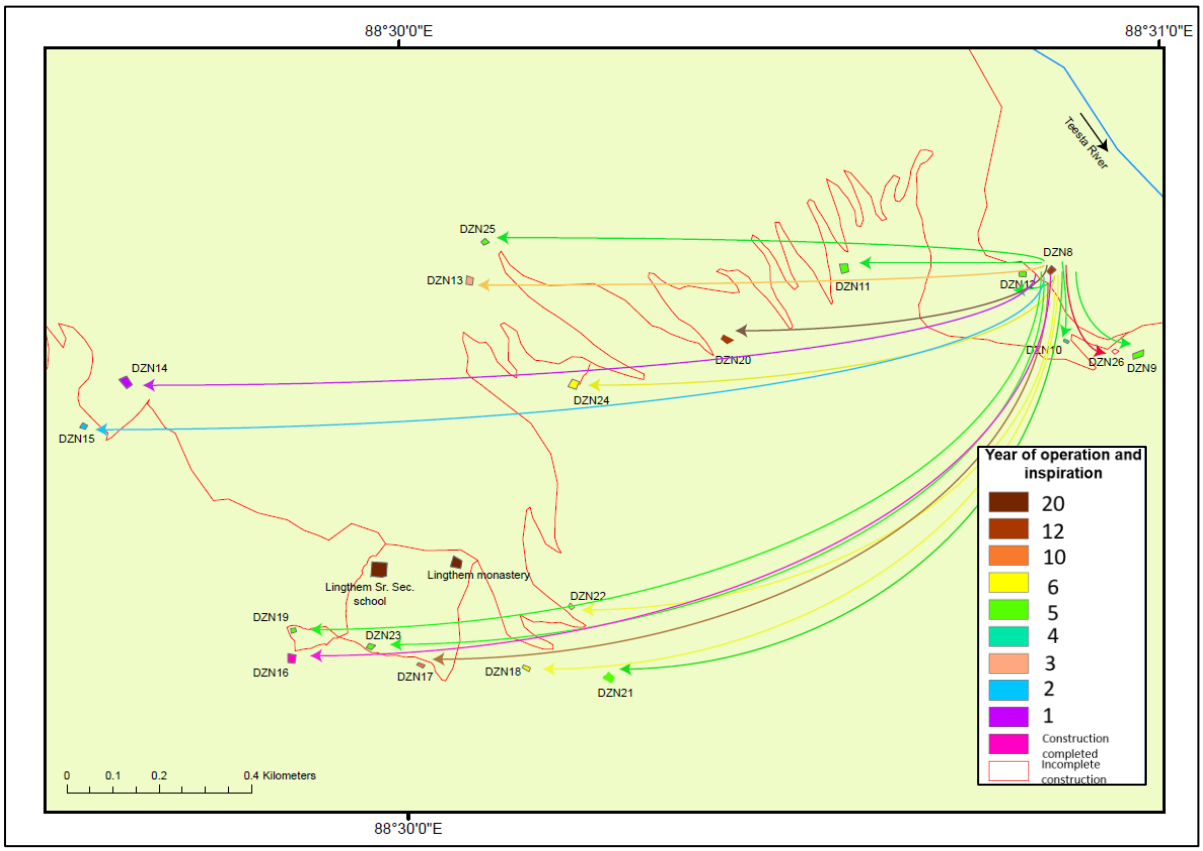

Figure 10b: The Touristscape of Lingthem (Dzongu)

6.2. The case of Lachen-Lachung

6.2.1. Identification of tourism resources

The most impactful resources in Lachung-Lachen comprehends different type of resources including activity-based resources (sightseeing or snow-related activities), physical resources (snow), infrastructure-related resources (facilities at accommodations) etc. Most of these impactful resources are distributable only regarding management.

6.1.2. The 'touristization' process and 'touristscape'

All the stakeholders started their businesses independently almost at the same time, in the late 1990s and thus it is very difficult to find any single influential pioneering point here. Lachen-Lachung is considered by tourists as a halt destination just like Phadamchen (see fig. 11a-11d).

6.2.2. Key-role players in rural tourism operations

The Dzumsa is a distinctively local authoritative system that exists only in Lachen-Lachung. They monitor the local tourism industry from a manifold perspective. The roles they assumed helped with the early development of tourism resources. Regarding resource management, the Dzumsa proved to be the most effective (see 6.5). LTDC (Lachen Tourism Development Committee) and LHDA (Lachung Hoteliers and Drivers Association) are two of the most impactful stakeholder groups from Lachen and Lachung respectively, that manage the local tourism operation after the Dzumsa. All of these institutions are resource managers. The tourism business owners are native to this land including accommodation owners (hotel, resort, homestay), restaurants, and souvenir shop owners. The service providers are not always local due to the very high level of leasing (83.56%).

6.2.3. The politics of tourism resource distribution

Tourism business in Lachen-Lachung is highly individualistic, but the management system is highly collective. These contrasting functions complement one another and facilitate sustainable business operations here. The community politics of Lachen-Lachung is different from any other destination. The main contention here is between the resource managers and the external service providers. The independent stakeholders claimed that although resource managers do not have any direct stake in the operation

of the tourism business. the policies and practices formulated by them too overpowering. Conflict between in-situ and ex-situ stakeholders are also evident here. A minor issue related to spatial distribution and pricing is noticeable in Thangu.

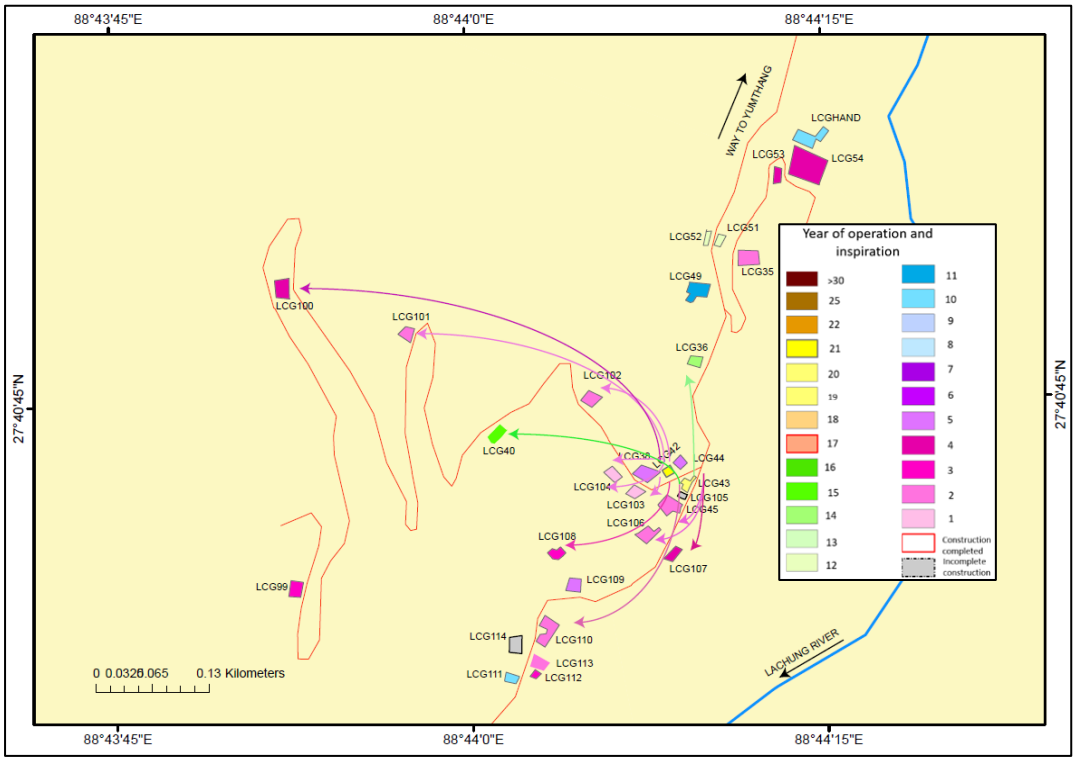

Figure 11a: The Touristscape of Upper Lachung

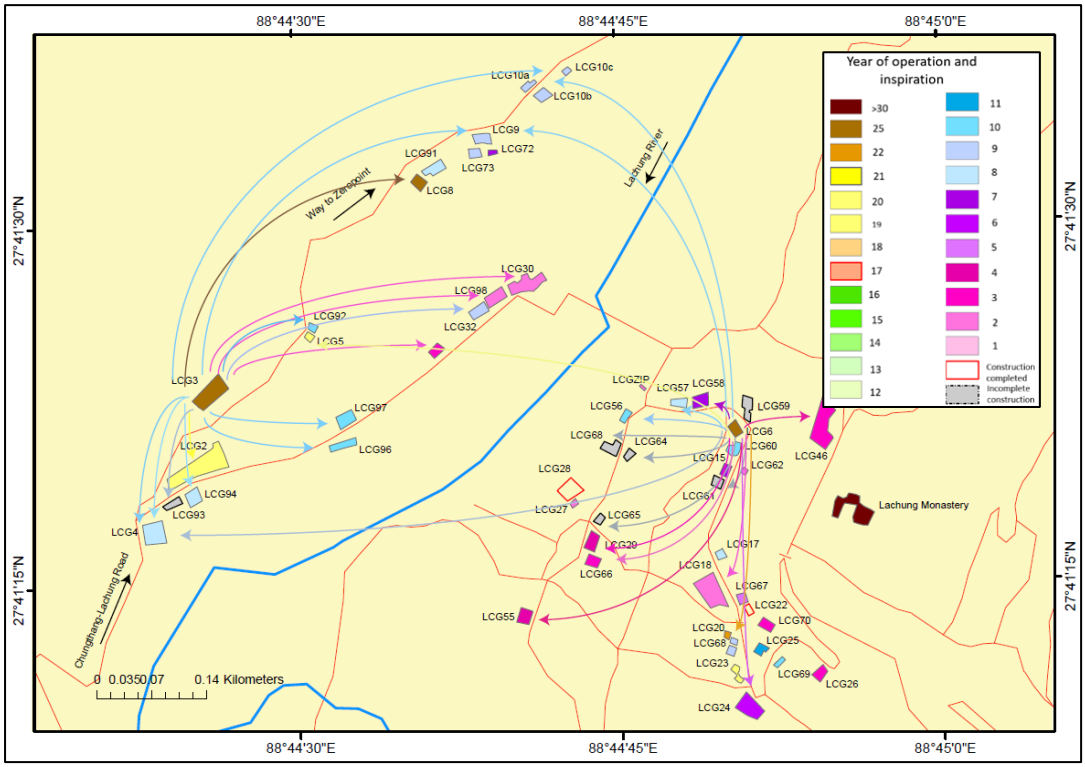

Figure 11b: The Touristscape of Lower Lachung

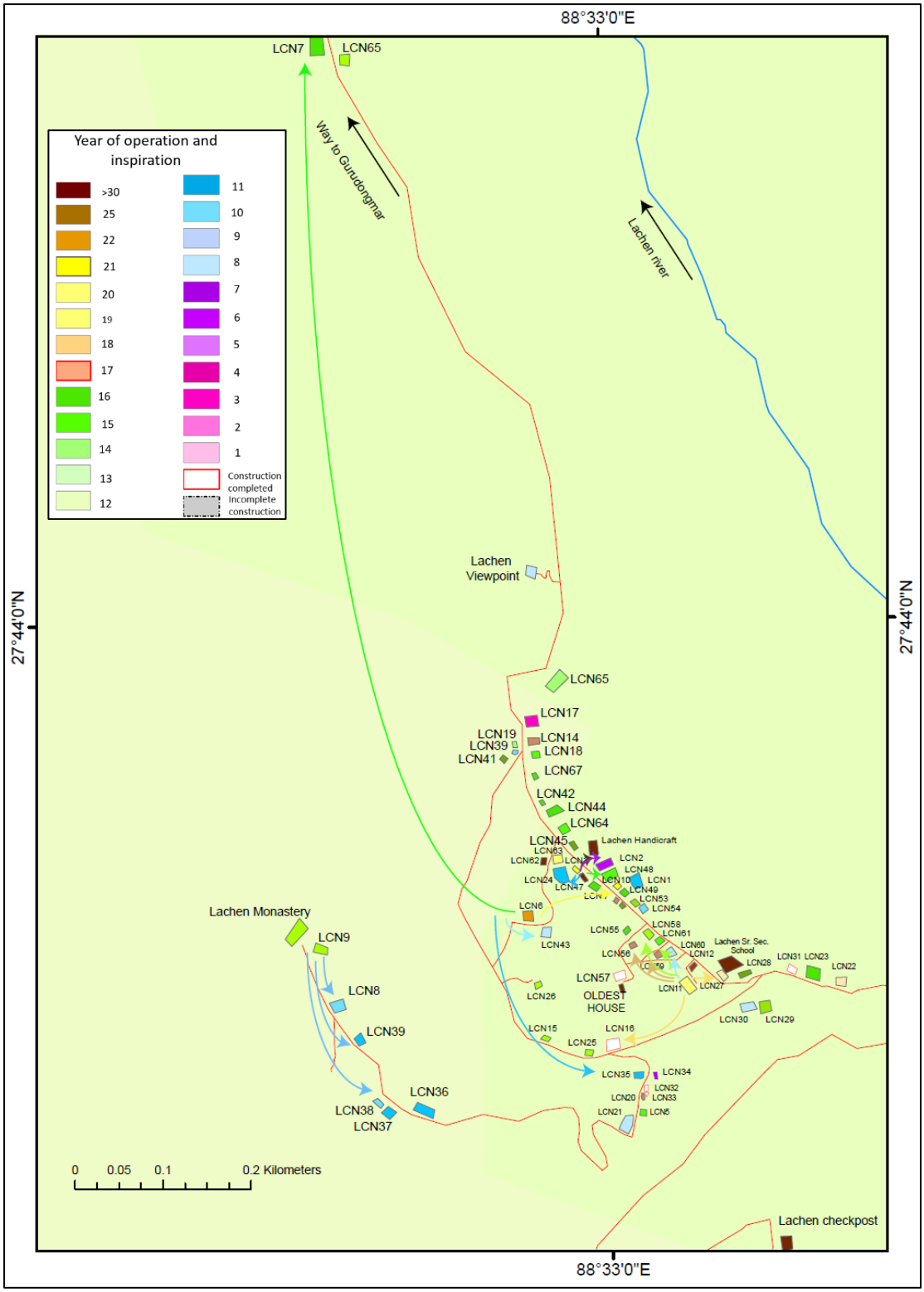

Figure 11c: The Touristscape of Lachen

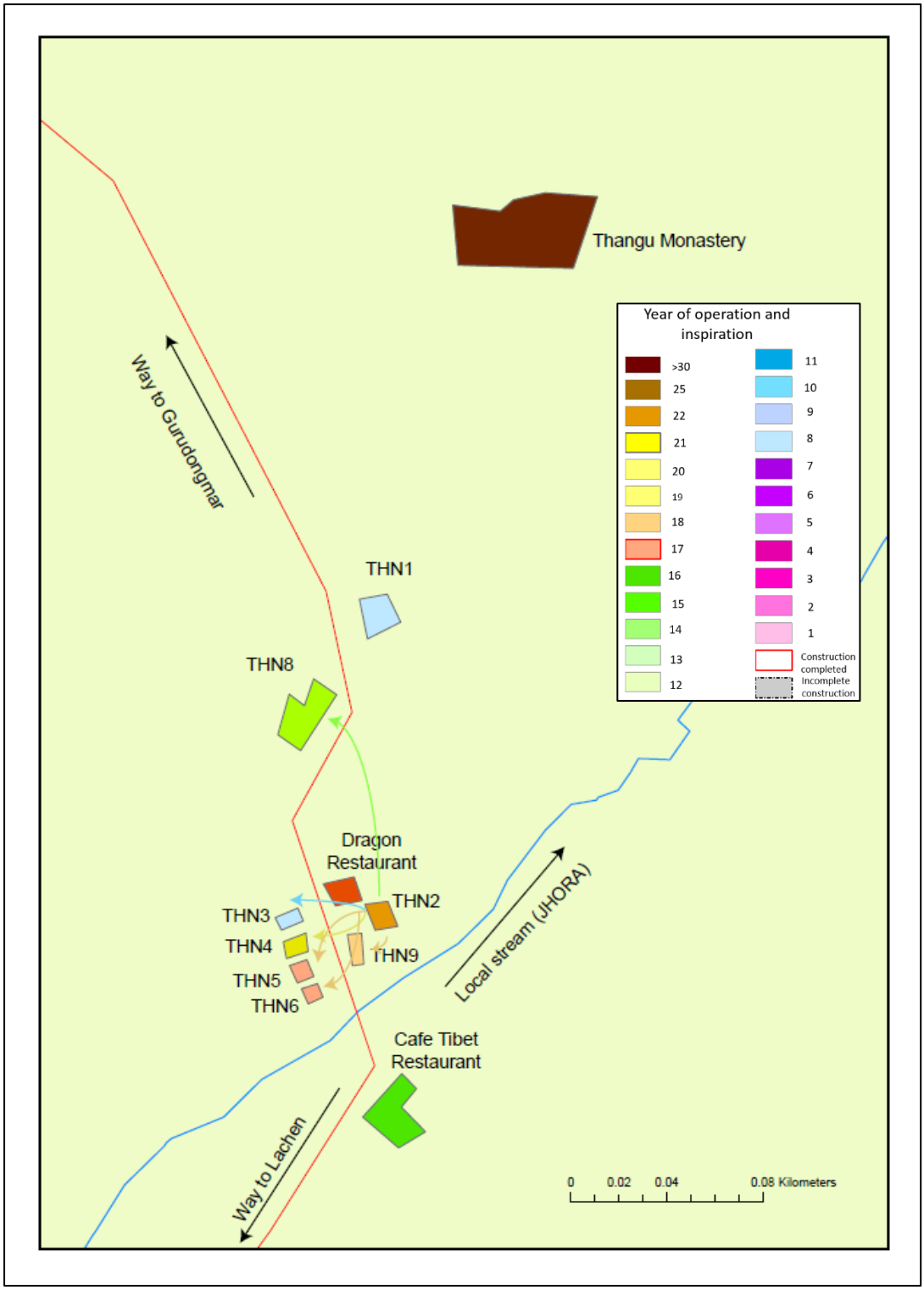

Figure 11d: The Touristscape of (Thangu) Lachen

6.3. Regional power structure of tourism stakeholders

The only factor that makes a stakeholder powerful here is their connection (see fig. 12). However, influential stakeholders can only influence how tourist resources are managed. The management of tourism in this district is strictly institutional and collective. Dzumsa and LHDA, LTDC occupy the top two tiers of Lachung-Lachen, having the highest

managerial capacity (local policy formulation, monitoring, regulating local price, dispute settlement, revenue collection).

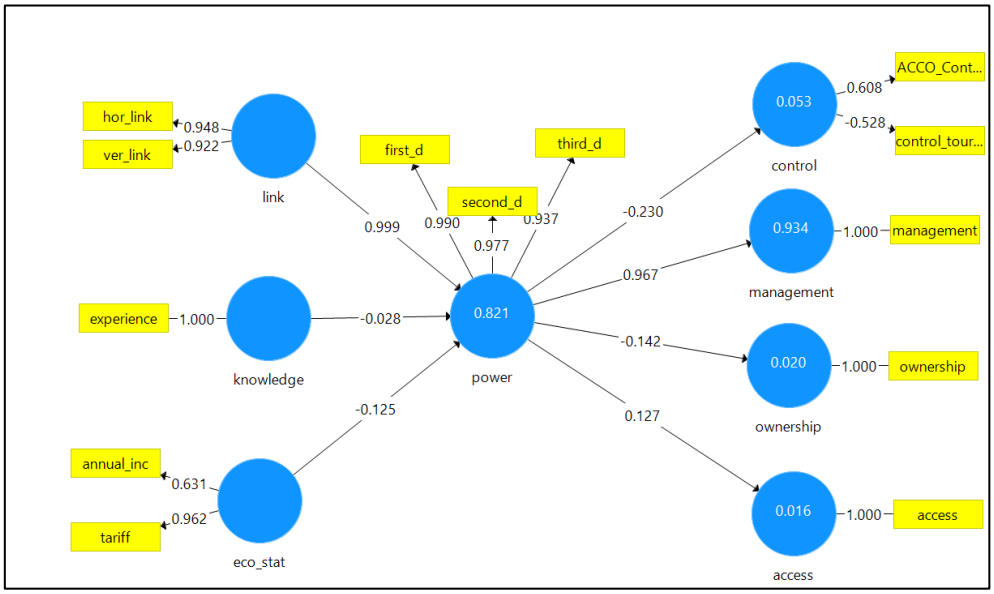

Figure 12: Relationship among factors of power, resultant power structure and resource distribution in North Sikkim

6.4. Regional narratives of sustainability in rural tourism

The statements of stakeholders from Dzongu are blatant examples of the negative perception of the state's spatial politics similar to South Sikkim. Other interested parties, however, have categorically rejected this notion. According to one of them, their own inactivity—rather than the state's discriminatory treatment of them—had stifled their progress.

> ….[S]ee it is not only about favourable location. You might have heard people saying about the nearness of certain resources to an accommodation unit makes it more attractive and that's why that establishment receives more tourists than us. But it's not true. Even during the last festival (Dzyotim festival) we (enthusiasts) contacted tourists (took the responsibility of promotion, and marketing) and decided to distribute the tourists equally amongst us, but then a few persons refused stating they do not have enough manpower or space.

It is abundantly clear that the sustainability of rural tourism depends not only on the location and the quality of the homestays but also on the effort and willingness of the stakeholder to engage in the long-term tourism operation.

The stakeholder network is notably dynamic in Lachen-Lachung, comprising sparse connections among stakeholders based on lease ownership (see fig. 13). Ventures having common lease owners share relation which shifts following changes in lease ownership (see fig. 13).

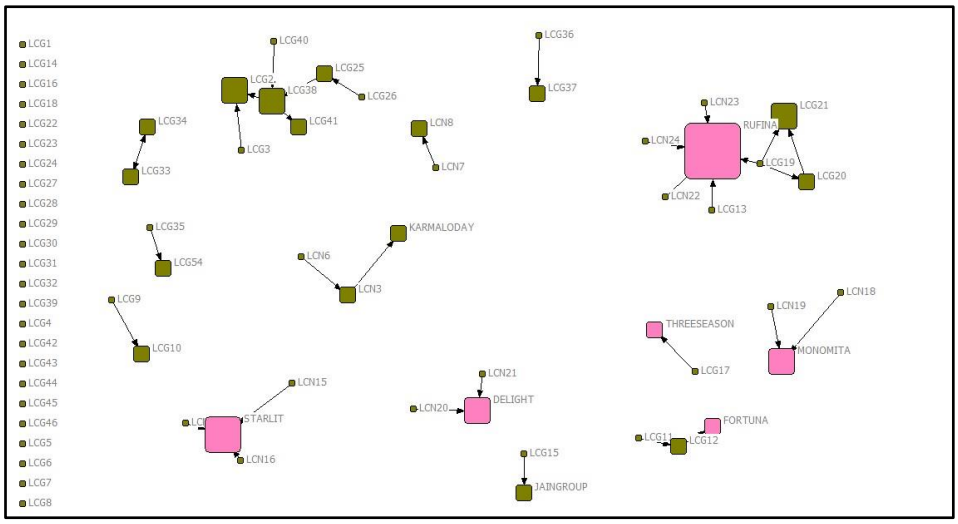

Figure 13: Nature of operational level network in Lachen-Lachung

Chapter 7

7. Inter-regional assessment of rural tourism in Sikkim

7.1. Inter-District SWOT analysis

The following tables provide a summary and comparison of each district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Table 4: Strengths of rural tourism operation in the four districts of Sikkim

East	West
Availability of majorly non-distributable physical resources Mass flow of tourists and abundance of accommodation Link followed by experience (pioneer effect) makes a stakeholder powerful Powerful stakeholders have ownership of, control over and access to RT (rural tourism) resources Availability of tailor-made services from professional stakeholders	Presence of diversified impactful RT resources Multiple stakeholder roles (presence of accommodation owner, restaurant owner, guide, bird guide, cultural performer) and better circulation of benefit Link is considered to be the only factor that significantly determines the position of stakeholder in the power hierarchy
South	**North**
Inception as a community-based RT destination Cultural resource-based destination with the amalgamation of other resources (longer stay duration, more spending) Availability of skilled and trained local stakeholders Multiple stakeholder roles (presence of accommodation owner, guide, cultural performer, souvenir maker) and better circulation of benefit	Presence of a diversified resource base Powerful stakeholders are determined in terms of their ability to manage RT resources Link is the only factor responsible for a stakeholder's position in the power structure Presence of strong community solidarity, exotic and unique culture

Link is considered to be the only factor that significantly determines the position of stakeholder in the power hierarchy, ensuring solidarity to some extent	

Table 5: Weakness of rural tourism operation in the four districts of Sikkim

East	West
Lack of packaging and promotion of cultural resources in tourism marketing Powerful stakeholders have little control over the management of the RT business Limited operation of CBTO Rigid, hierarchical and viciously cyclical power structure guided by pioneering effect Presence of inter and intra-destination, inter-racial community politics Withdrawal of participation/ leasing out Pockets with poor telecommunication network.	Excessive dependency on trekking and hiking activity Unequal competition between homestay and hotel business Powerful stakeholders can affect the RT resource distribution in all possible ways Spatial politics (location-based and pricing)
South	**North**
Powerful stakeholders can affect the RT resource distribution in all possible ways Stagnant CBRT system and its ill effects of it The presence of spatial politics as the local impactful resources are mostly distributable Unequal scope for participation Authenticity vs standardization From community-run, rotation-based, united operation to family-centric, availability-based, fragmented operation	Lack of packaging and promotion of cultural resources in tourism marketing Dynamic pricing system and conflict Lack of ample local involvement

Table 6: Opportunity of rural tourism operation in the four districts of Sikkim

East	West
Mass tourism product development Capitalization, packaging and promotion of exotic local, cultural culture Increase in stay duration Scope for community-based management and adoption of eco-friendly tourism management strategy Scope for more local involvement and better in-situ circulation of benefit Betterment of telecommunication network	Better packaging and promotion of resources other than trekking and hiking-related resources Scope to increase stay duration Scope for better community-based RT management
South	**North**
Adoption of new marketing, packaging and promotion strategies at the destination level (social media-based promotion and marketing) Presence of aspirant participants Reviving community-based tourism operation and management Revival of cultural activities, programmes and festivals	Presence of unique cultures (Lepcha and Lachungpa, Lachenpa culture) New product development Mass tourism product development Scope for more local involvement and better in-situ circulation of benefit

Table 7: Threat of rural tourism operation in the four districts of Sikkim

East	West
Presence of competitors with the similar resource base Ill effects of mass tourism on social and environment Intra and inter-destination community conflict Cultural loss	Climate change and the future of trekking and hiking Underutilization and abandonment of resources Pricing and market capture-related politics

Monopolization of RT business by powerful pioneers	
South	**North**
Strong competition from other destinations Presence of better alternative livelihood opportunities	Ill effects of mass tourism Cultural loss and cultural shock Crisis related to drivers (alcoholism, room and parking crunch) Climate change and the future of snow-based tourism

7.2. Overall narratives of rural tourism sustainability in Sikkim

The present study revealed that in rural destinations pioneering effect may make the power structure rigid, hierarchical and viciously cyclical (see fig. 14). The dependency on the other stakeholders and the constructive connections of the stakeholders makes them powerful in an operational network.

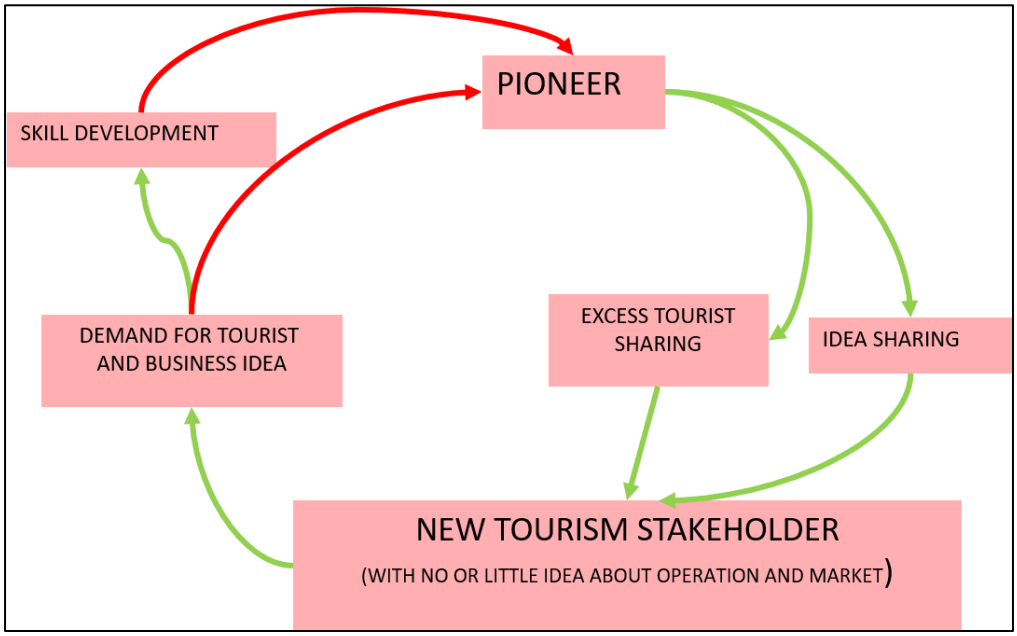

Figure 14: Vicious cycle of Pioneer-Dependency

Despite having experience, if a pioneer fails to maintain positive connections with other stakeholders, that individual might lose their position in the power hierarchy (see fig. 15). Stakeholders located at different levels of the power-pyramid exercise various types of spatial and non-spatial politics. Isolation of stakeholders based on their nearness of a

stakeholder to an impactful resource is the most crucial form of spatial politics seen in many local-resource-based destinations like Aritar and Yuksom. Location-based politics is also played by the state while allocating state-aided homestays.

The distribution of resources over touristscape reveals that strategic locations within a destination are always historically related to the location of the pioneer. The remoteness of the stakeholders from the impactful resources or highly accessible points generates the politics related to price-dynamic. Conflict among internal and external stakeholders (local vs. tour operator, driver, lessor vs. lessee), individual and institution, accommodation owner and other stakeholders, and state-aided and private ventures are some of the conflicts generated due to both these spatial and non-spatial politics. Due to the ongoing conflict and many other reasons (migration of young workforce, ageing of workforce, unequal scope of participation, unequal benefit generation, presence of better livelihood option, higher wage rate of local labour, lack of time), the withdrawal rate is also high among some of the destinations.

The gendered perspective of power structure reveals a very interesting fact. The quantitative figures report that women generally belong to the lower hierarchy in the power structure. The narratives, however, have played a different role and are revealing their true sense of empowerment.

Discussing the dimension of success and failure unveils that the success or failure of a destination in a circuit is also sometimes dependent on the circuit morphology. Destinations that substitute for one another in a circuit may give birth to inert-destination conflict. If the distributions of resources are widely different from one destination of a circuit to another, that might lead to the failure of the destinations like Phadamchen.

Based on the significant problems, politics and resultant conflicts, the following recommendations have been made:

- Homestay business should be managed at the community level; if not, it might get fragmented.
- CBTO coupled with strong pre-existing community solidarity, might help the long-run survival of rural tourism (Lachen-Lachung).
- The community-based RT (Rural Tourism) management system should be dynamic.

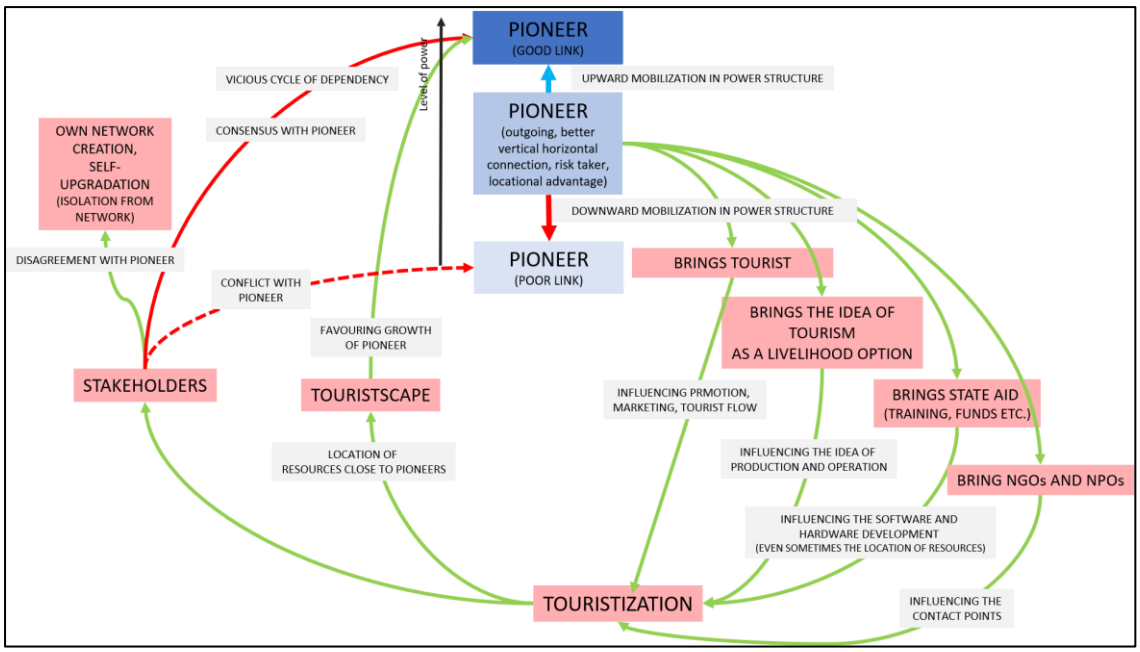
PIONEER
(GOOD LINK)
UPWARD MOBILIZATION IN POWER STRUCTURE
PIONEER
(outgoing, better vertical horizontal connection, risk taker, locational advantage)
DOWNWARD MOBILIZATION IN POWER STRUCTURE
PIONEER
(POOR LINK)
BRINGS TOURIST
BRINGS THE IDEA OF TOURISM AS A LIVELIHOOD OPTION
BRINGS STATE AID (TRAINING, FUNDS ETC.)
BRING NGOs AND NPOs
INFLUENCING THE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE DEVELOPMENT (EVEN SOMETIMES THE LOCATION OF RESOURCES)
INFLUENCING THE CONTACT POINTS
TOURISTIZATION
INFLUENCING THE IDEA OF PRODUCTION AND OPERATION
INFLUENCING PRMOTION, MARKETING, TOURIST FLOW
LOCATION OF RESOURCES CLOSE TO PIONEERS
TOURISTSCAPE
FAVOURING GROWTH OF PIONEER
STAKEHOLDERS
CONFLICT WITH PIONEER
DISAGREEMENT WITH PIONEER
OWN NETWORK CREATION, SELF-UPGRADATION (ISOLATION FROM NETWORK)
CONSENSUS WITH PIONEER
VICIOUS CYCLE OF DEPENDENCY
Level of power

Figure 15: Relationship among Link, Power and Mobilization in the Power Hierarchy

- Despite massive flow, circuit destinations (like Lachen-Lachung, and Silk route) are still relatively stable because of the ILP (Inner Line Permit) system. Such a regulatory system may be introduced to maintain integrity and sustainability in other destinations in Sikkim.
- Before allocating state aid (homestays, funds, credits), its long-term utility should be checked.
- The process of allocation of state aid should be transparent.
- The state should check the progress and ground reality of state-aided ventures.
- Homestay and hotels business should be separated, and establishments should be relabeled if necessary.
- Besides hardware development, software development should also be equally prioritized.
- Before setting the norm of equal prices in community-based ventures, the scope for standardizing rooms and services should be checked.
- A rigorous and continuous destination-level promotion strategy should exist to reduce the long wait time in CBTO-based tourism operations (where CBTO cyclically allocates tourists) and discourage withdrawal from participation.
- Stakeholders should adhere to the locally widely accepted norms (conservation, quality service provision); otherwise, this may dismantle the entire operation or give rise to agitation against him/her.

Chapter 8

8. Conclusion:

Given the importance of rural tourism as a significant area of research within the field of tourism, this study has examined two critical elements of rural tourism with one another: the stakeholders and the resources. It attempted to explain how the stakeholder power structure in a network of rural tourism destinations might impact rural tourism resources distribution. Additionally, it tried to determine how the overall phenomenon changed under the performance level of the destinations.

Three objectives were addressed in the current study, and significant results were obtained.

The first objective explored the most impactful tourism resources and the spatial pattern of touristscape resulting from the touristization process. This study has successfully identified the impactful rural tourism resources characterizing the sampled destinations. The results imply that these sites might rely on natural, cultural, or activity-based resources that could be either local or distant. These resources' distributions (control, access, ownership or management) are dynamic across stakeholders and destinations. The study also demonstrated that the pioneer effect serves as the primary motivation for the touristization process in rural areas. It has effectively highlighted how the nature of a destination, its resource profile, and the length of the tourists' stays affect the distribution of its resources through time and space.

The second objective was to reveal which stakeholder groups are key players in rural tourism operations. The study has efficaciously specified that key operational level stakeholders encompass resource owners, service providers, and managerial institutions or individuals. The most predominant group among them is the owner of a resource, particularly lodging.

The third objective of this research dealt with internal politics and stakeholders' power structures and their relation to resource distribution. Furthermore, it has also explored how the subsequent spatial pattern of touristscape differs in relatively more and less successful rural tourism destinations. The study has successfully concluded that in the case of rural tourism, the link of a stakeholder is the most significant in determining his position in the power structure. The stakeholder's experience could be another important consideration, but not always. Interestingly, this study's findings suggest that a stakeholder's economic situation has little bearing on their position within the power structure. Except for the North District, all other

districts have powerful individual stakeholders who significantly impact the control, access, and ownership of resources. In contrast, institutions (the local governing body and CBTOs) are found to be powerful in the North district. Collectively, they are having a significant impact on only the managerial aspect of resource distribution. It implies that when there is strong community support, even when an operation is highly individualistic, the management system can still be collective, resulting in a more sustainable operation despite a large influx of tourists.

This study also effectually clarified how trivial elements like communication infrastructure or technological know-how may affect stakeholders' mobility within the power structure. In the line of earlier studies, this suggests that the distribution of power and resources are intricately and inextricably linked. Furthermore, the relationship can occasionally be both-way and highly complex. However, the findings reveal new areas of knowledge development in recent rural tourism research; for instance, the link between stakeholders has proven to be the most powerful factor of power instead of knowledge, process or access to the resource. The spatial location has become a barrier to some stakeholders' growth rather than a facilitator.

This study placed the operation of tourism and 'everyday rurality' in a single theoretical framework and treated rural tourism as a distinct research entity. The study identifies many recently emerging issues that have received little or no attention. For instance, this study examines the stakeholders' power structure from all three dimensions: decision-making, environmental control, and idea control. The significance of social cohesion and power structure as a determinant of success has never been acknowledged in earlier research. Resource allocation and the politics around it are crucial for a tourism operation to be successful in the long run. It has likewise received less attention in earlier studies. This research acknowledged that reality and examined these crucial components and their interplay. As a result, it will not only fill the existing knowledge void but also inspire funders, promoters, and planners to consider the interplay of these crucial factors before putting a plan into action, ensuring optimal and long-term socioeconomic benefits.

Despite the unique contribution of the current research, there are some limitations, which could be seen as a chance for additional research in future. The study is specifically focused on a few sampled tourist villages of Sikkim. The nature of tourism operations and the course of touristization may also vary accordingly, leading to different findings as the day-to-day realities of the villages change with their physical, cultural, and social settings.

Reference:

Barbieri, C. (2013). Assessing the sustainability of agritourism in the US: A comparison between agritourism and other farm entrepreneurial ventures. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 21(2),* 252–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2012.685174

Beritelli, P., & Laesser, C. (2011). Power dimensions and influence reputation in tourist destinations: Empirical evidence from a network of actors and stakeholders. *Tourism Management*, *32*(6), 1299-1309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.12.010

Bhasin, V. (2002). Ethnic relations among the people of Sikkim. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2002.11893000

Camilleri, M. A. (2018). Tourism Supply and Demand. In Travel Marketing, Tourism Economics and the Airline Product (Chapter 8, pp. 139-154). Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature. Retrieved from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3289478

Casanueva, C., Gallego, Á., & García-Sánchez, M. R. (2016). Social network analysis in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *19*(12), 1190-1209. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2014.990422

Dar, S. N., Adhikari, P., & Singh, A. (2019). Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in Eastern Himalayas: A Study of Sikkim, India. *History Research Journal, 5(5),* 1561-1575.

Demkova, M., Sharma, S., Mishra, P. K., Dahal, D. R., Pachura, A., Herman, G. V., Kostilnikova, J., Kolesárová, J. & Matlovicova, K. (2022). Potential for Sustainable Development of Rural Communities by Community-Based Ecotourism. A Case Study of Rural Village Pastanga, Sikkim Himalaya, India. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, *43*(3), 964-975. https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.43316-910

Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation. (2017). Welcome to The Official Web Portal of Sikkim Tourism: Department & Stakeholders | Department of Tourism | Awards |. <http://www.sikkimtourism.gov.in/Webforms/General/DepartmentStakeholders/DeptAwards.aspx> [Accessed 12 August 2020].

Ebrahimi, S., & Khalifah, Z. (2014). Community supporting attitude toward community-based tourism development; non-participants perspective. *Asian Social Science*, *10*(17), 29.

Farmaki, A., Altinay, L., Botterill, D., & Hilke, S. (2015). Politics and sustainable tourism: The case of Cyprus. *Tourism management, 47,* 178-190. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616680701647527

Hall, C. M. (2008). *Tourism planning: Policies, processes and relationships* (2nd ed.). Pearson education.

Hazra, S., Fletcher, J., & Wilkes, K. (2017). An evaluation of power relationships among stakeholders in the tourism industry networks of Agra, India. *Current issues in tourism*, *20*(3), 278-294. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2014.887662

Iorio, M., & Wall, G. (2012). Behind the masks: Tourism and community in Sardinia. *Tourism Management, 33(6),* 1440–1449. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.01.011

Karali, A., Das, S., & Roy, H. (2021). Forty years of the rural tourism research: reviewing the trend, pattern and future agenda. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 1-28.

Kelliher, F., Reinl, L., Johnson, T. G., & Joppe, M. (2018). The role of trust in building rural tourism micro firm network engagement: A multi-case study. *Tourism Management*, *68*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.02.014

Lane, B. (1994a). What is rural tourism?. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, *2*(1-2), 7-21.

Lane, B. (1994b). Sustainable rural tourism strategies: A tool for development and conservation. *Journal of sustainable tourism, 2(1-2),* 102-111.

Leiper, N. (1990). Tourist attraction systems. *Annals of tourism research*, *17*(3), 367-384. https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(90)90004-B

London, W. R., & Lohmann, G. (2014). Power in the context of cruise destination stakeholders' interrelationships. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, *13*, 24-35. http://hdl.handle.net/10072/67182

Michalko, G. (2015). A content analysis of rural tourism research. *MPRA Paper 77416*, University Library of Munich, Germany.

Lukes, S. (1986). *Power: A radical view*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Nair, V., Munikrishnan, U. T., Rajaratnam, S. D., & King, N. (2015). Redefining rural tourism in Malaysia: A conceptual perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 20(3),* 314–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2014.889026

Paul, A. (2015). Tribal Entrepreneurship through Rural Tourism and Development: A Case Study on Hee Gaon, Sikkim. Retrieved from: http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/109

Saito, H., & Ruhanen, L. (2017). Power in tourism stakeholder collaborations: Power types and power holders. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *31*, 189-196. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.01.001

Saxena, G. (2012). Geographies of rural tourism: Current progress and paradoxes. In J. Wilson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of tourism geographies* (pp. 238–244). Routledge.

Saxena, G., Clark, G., Oliver, T., & Ilbery, B. (2007). Conceptualizing integrated rural tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, *9*(4), 347-370. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616680701647527

Saxena, G., & Ilbery, B. (2008). Integrated rural tourism a border case study. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *35(1)*, 233–254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.07.010

Scheyvens, R., & Biddulph, R. (2018). Inclusive tourism development. *Tourism Geographies*, *20*(4), 589-609. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2017.1381985

Thapa, S. (2019). Reciprocity and Relations following Death: Reflections on the Practice of "Sarau" in Sikkim. *Social trends*, 6, 101-112. Retrieved from: http://ir.nbu.ac.in/handle/123456789/3561

Wanner, A., & Pröbstl-Haider, U. (2019). Barriers to stakeholder involvement in sustainable rural tourism development—experiences from southeast Europe. *Sustainability*, *11*(12), 3372. doi:10.3390/su11123372

Wearing, S., & McDonald, M. (2002). The development of community-based tourism: Re-thinking the relationship between tour operators and development agents as intermediaries in rural and isolated area communities. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, *10*(3), 191-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580208667162

Yankholmes, A. (2018). Tourism as an exercise in three-dimensional power: Evidence from Ghana. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *25*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.11.001

Yang, J., Ryan, C., & Zhang, L. (2013). Social conflict in communities impacted by tourism. Tourism management, 35, 82-93. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.06.002